

TRANSFORMING THE IMAGE OF YAKUTIA IN RUSSIAN LYRIC POETRY

TRANSFORMANDO A IMAGEM DE YAKUTIA NA POESIA LÍRICA DA RÚSSIA

TRANSFORMANDO LA IMAGEN DE YAKUTIA EN LA POESÍA LÍRICA RUSA

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ABSTRACT: The topic of the reception of Russian classics is often considered in the context of the formation of Yakut literature to determine the influence of Russian literature on the genesis of the Yakut written tradition. In the study of the genesis of Yakut literature, the focus is usually on the influence of Russian literature. Therefore, there is already sufficient experience in determining the degree of reliance of literature with a recent system of writing on the Russian literary tradition. Nevertheless, the question of the influence of the Yakut theme on the formation of the creative consciousness of Russian writers is also difficult. Upon close examination, the reception of a foreign culture appears to be sufficiently differentiated: the influence of the Yakut culture was predominantly indirect. The Yakut theme in Russian literature has a receptive character since there was no concept of the Yakut context at all in the socio-cultural situation of the 19th century. Writers begin to form the "Yakut text" in Russian literature based on the perception of the listener and the reader. Thus, the comprehension of the Yakut culture follows the path of recoding the texts of an "alien" tradition into the language of "one's own" literary tradition. The article deals with the transformation of the image of Yakutia in the works of Russian poets of the 19th–20th centuries. The trend is considered from the perspective of expanding the aspects of the figurative representation of Yakutia and the nature of perception of Russian poetry to the Yakut national topos and is divided into several stages.

KEYWORDS: K.F. Ryleyev. A.A. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky. P.L. Dravert. J.A. Brodsky. Y.A. Yevtushenko. Image of yakutia. Russian poetry. Folklore. Mythologism.

RESUMO: O tópico da recepção dos clássicos russos é frequentemente considerado no contexto da formação da literatura Yakut para determinar a influência da literatura russa na gênese da tradição escrita Yakut. No estudo da gênese da literatura Yakut, o foco geralmente está na influência da literatura russa. Portanto, já existe experiência suficiente para determinar o grau de confiança da literatura com um sistema recente de escrita na tradição literária russa. No entanto, a questão da influência do tema Yakut na formação da consciência criativa dos escritores russos também é difícil. Após um exame mais detalhado, a recepção de uma cultura estrangeira parece ser suficientemente diferenciada: a influência da cultura Yakut foi predominantemente indireta. O tema Yakut na literatura russa tem um

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caráter receptivo, uma vez que não havia nenhum conceito de contexto Yakut na situação sociocultural do século XIX. Os escritores começam a formar o "texto Yakut" na literatura russa com base na percepção do ouvinte e do leitor. Assim, a compreensão da cultura Yakut segue o caminho de recodificar os textos de uma tradição "estrangeira" na linguagem da "própria" tradição literária. O artigo trata da transformação da imagem de Yakutia nas obras de poetas russos dos séculos XIX e XX. A tendência é considerada a partir da perspectiva de expandir os aspectos da representação figurativa de Yakutia e da natureza da percepção da poesia russa ao topos nacional Yakut e está dividida em várias etapas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: K.F. Ryleyev. A.A. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky. P.L. Dravert. J.A. Brodsky. Y.A. Yevtushenko. Imagem de yakutia. Poesia russa. Folclore. Mitologismo.

RESUMEN: *El tema de la recepción de los clásicos rusos a menudo se considera en el contexto de la formación de la literatura Yakut para determinar la influencia de la literatura rusa en la génesis de la tradición escrita Yakut. En el estudio de la génesis de la literatura de Yakut, el enfoque suele estar en la influencia de la literatura rusa. Por lo tanto, ya existe suficiente experiencia para determinar el grado de dependencia de la literatura con un sistema reciente de escritura sobre la tradición literaria rusa. Sin embargo, la cuestión de la influencia del tema de Yakut en la formación de la conciencia creativa de los escritores rusos también es difícil. Tras un examen detenido, la recepción de una cultura extranjera parece estar suficientemente diferenciada: la influencia de la cultura Yakut fue predominantemente indirecta. El tema de Yakut en la literatura rusa tiene un carácter receptivo, ya que no existía ningún concepto del contexto de Yakut en la situación sociocultural del siglo XIX. Los escritores comienzan a formar el "texto Yakut" en la literatura rusa basándose en la percepción del oyente y el lector. Así, la comprensión de la cultura Yakut sigue el camino de recodificar los textos de una tradición "ajena" al lenguaje de la tradición literaria "propia". El artículo trata sobre la transformación de la imagen de Yakutia en las obras de los poetas rusos de los siglos XIX y XX. La tendencia se considera desde la perspectiva de ampliar los aspectos de la representación figurativa de Yakutia y la naturaleza de la percepción de la poesía rusa al topos nacional de Yakut y se divide en varias etapas.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: K.F. Ryleyev. A.A. Bestúzhev-Marlinsky. P.L. Dravert. J.A. Brodsky. Y.A. Yevtushenko. Imagen de yakutia. Poesía rusa. Folklore. Mitologismo.

Introduction

The Yakut theme in Russian poetry is often considered in the context of the formation of Yakut literature and the determination of the cultural diversity in the works by Russian poets. The work "Russian and Yakut literary connections" compiled by researcher Kanaev (1965) is practically the only monographic work on intercultural communication. There are no fundamental studies directly devoted to the development of the theme of Yakutia in Russian poetry in the 19th and 20th centuries, as such. The works of modern researchers are publications on the works of individual writers. In this regard, it seems **relevant** to study the transformation of the image of Yakutia in the works of Russian poets, from the moment the

region was first mentioned in Russian literature in the 19th century to the lyric poetry of the 20th century. The article deals with the general figurative image of Yakutia in Russian poetry of the 19th–20th centuries and the transformation in the conceptualization of the image of Yakutia by Russian poets in the context of cross-cultural communication. The development of the Yakut theme is determined from the perspective of expanding the aspects of the figurative image of Yakutia and the nature of the perception of Russian poetry to the Yakut national topos based on the poem "Voinarovsky" by Ryleyev (1825), ballad "Saatyr" by Bestuzhev-Marlinsky (1828), Dravert's (1909) poems "Forgotten graves" and "In the gorge of Chochur-Muran" (1911), Brodsky's (1961) poem "Knock" and Yevtushenko's (1967) poem "Diamonds and tears".

Methods

The fundamental works of B.V. Tomashevsky and V.I. Tyupa were used as a methodological basis. The image of Yakutia in Russian poetry is considered in the context of understanding the image as a "visual representation" (TOMASHEVSKY, 1996, p. 57) and the image as "a representation possessing conceptuality and serving as an analog of another reality that exists in secondary reality" (TYUPA, 2009, p. 112).

Results

We established that the transformation of the image of Yakutia went through several stages in the work of the selected poets: the stage of isolation, the stage of cultural conceptualization, the stage of conceptualization of the geographical area, and the stage of individualization and branching. The transformation of the image of Yakutia in Russian poetry in the 19th–20th centuries from the poem by K.F. Ryleyev to the poem by Y.A. Yevtushenko shows the process of rethinking the figurative concept of the provincial region and the transition from the isolated position of an unfamiliar space to unification, a single geographic and ideological space of the homeland. Based on the characteristics of the poets' figurative ideas about the region, the development of the image of Yakutia in Russian poetry can be divided into several stages: the first stage (provisionally called "isolation"), in which the traditional image of Yakutia as a "vast prison" is formed (Ryleyev). In the poem by K.F. Ryleyev "Voinarovsky", the image of Yakutia is presented as a "bleak" and "deserted" "country of blizzards and snows", the "gloomy nature" of which is "harsh and wild"

(Ryleyev). However, these qualities of natural space are interpreted not so much in a negative but positive sense: the north turns out to be a cruel place but ideal for Ryleyev's romantic protagonist to assert his heroic self-worth. Thus, the author in the poem organically embodies the romantic idea of Yakutia as a symbol of alienation, overcoming: "he fought the wayward fate" (Ryleyev). The first stage forms the idea of Yakutia as a distant, harsh land that generates event-driven heroics of existence. **The second stage** already elaborates and specifies the poetic idea of the northern region and reveals to the Russian reader a rich and original world of Yakut culture and folklore. Materials of Yakut folklore were used by A.A. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky as the basis for the ballad "Saatyr" (ALEKSEEV; EMELYANOV, 1995). In the ballad (due to its genre), the northern locus becomes that spatial point of the universe, in which the lyrical subject opens up the prospect of a fairy-tale and mythological otherness. For the first time in Russian literature, there are descriptions of traditional rituals, beliefs, household items, and the way of life of the Yakuts. **The third stage** is characterized by the fact that the landscape image of Yakutia appears in Russian poetry. In the works by P.L. Dravert, the focus is on landscape lyric poetry: the image of Yakutia is complemented by saturated and multifaceted natural descriptions. Moreover, a poetic characteristic is given precisely to the geographical area of Yakutia which also specified the idea of the northern region and gave the region real features. In the next **stage**, a subjective-psychological image of Yakutia is formed. There is a mythologization of space in J.A. Brodsky's poetry, which is associated with the maximum expansion of the empirical limits of the world, the extensive development of which becomes a process of intense gaining spiritual experience.

The philosophical image of Yakutia reflects the poet's inner state, projecting through space the fundamental motive of death and the feeling of emptiness of the lyrical subject who seems to be at the mythological border between reality and imagination, life and death. The area of Yakutia in the poem moves away from the real area and acquires an individual meaning for the poet – the poet looks from the outside at the image-repository of events. In Y.A. Yevtushenko's poetry, a different perspective on Yakutia is reflected: the poet affirms the spiritual kinship of the lyrical subject with the Yakuts, thereby declaring the moral value of the northern land as the source of Orthodox cultural consciousness. Thus, the image of Yakutia becomes one of the key northern loci in the structure of the poetic world in Russian literature and reveals the dynamic development of semantic potential. Appearing in Russian poetry of the 19th century as a harsh land giving rise to eventful heroics of existence, Yakutia is a source of spiritual revelations of the "human elf" in the lyric poetry of the 20th century.

Discussion

Yakutia in K.F. Ryleyev's poem "Voinarovsky". Ryleyev never actually was in Yakutia. The eponymous poem about the exiled Mazepa supporter A. Voinarovsky written in 1825 by Ryleyev during his service in St. Petersburg is the first work where a reliable portrayal of Yakutia in Russian literature is presented as the setting of the poem (Ryleyev). The protagonist of the poem, Andrey Voinarovsky, is presented by the poet as a Byronic romantic character. The protagonist is alienated from the people around him. However, the nature of Yakutia, raging and echoing with his emotions and life events, makes the protagonist overcome difficulties: "the land of blizzards and snows", "deserted", "gloomy", "stern" and "wild" (Ryleyev). The north gives rise to the motive of overcoming to show the romantic essence of the character: "I am wild and sullen", "gave the sufferer a stern appearance", "an eternal prisoner", "like the Siberian climate, I have become cruel and cold in my soul", "thrown into distant snows", "sufferer-prisoner" (Ryleyev). In the poem, the author used such Siberian words as "doha" (fur coat), "yurt", "palma" (weapon), "varnak", which give the poem its originality (Ryleyev). The scene of a deer hunt is described in detail which should emphasize the masculine nature of a warrior, a hunter in Voinarovsky's character. The north here is given the status of a harsh land which creates an archaic incarnation of a warrior, shows the true heroism of man.

Motives of the Yakut folk tale in the ballad "Saatyr" by A.A. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky. After the December uprising, the court stripped Bestuzhev-Marlinsky of the noble rank and title and sentenced him to 20 years of exile in Yakutsk where the writer lived from Dec. 1827 to Jun. 1829 (PORKHUNOV, 2001). The exiled poet was interested in the folklore of the Yakut people, a topic that had not previously been heard in Russian literature. The ballad "Saatyr" was written by Bestuzhev-Marlinsky in 1828 in Yakutsk. The poet borrowed the plot from the Yakut tale of a married woman named Saatyr (from the notes to the ballad: meaning "playful"), who, pretending to be dead, after the funeral wanted to escape with her beloved Buidukan. The lovers die, and their spirit still frightens the unfaithful wives. Almost unknown to Russian literature, Yakutia is the immediate setting in the ballad "Saatyr". The autumnal nature of Yakutia is described as a place where the Lena River flows in the morning under a "curtain of fog" and "between the towers of the mountains"; the forest is described as "decaying", and the wind "shakes the coffins of shamans" (Bestuzhev-Marlinsky). The night before the climax is colorful, full of metaphors, comparisons, almost fairytale, and there are colored willows whose "curls" are "strewn with dewdrops," the hills

and meadows are "embroidered with a pattern of shadows", the crescent, like a musk deer with golden antlers "rose" over the "gloomy" rocks, and its lone ray like a shining road, fell along the Lena River, the fog is "transparent" at night, visions flicker along the mosses and paths of the "forbidden meadows" (Bestuzhev-Marlinsky). By the end of the ballad, the landscape is less poetic – there is the desert, the tundra of Eastern Siberia, darkness, and the "fatal hill" (Bestuzhev-Marlinsky). The fauna of Yakutia in the ballad is also diverse: goats, horses, musk deer. The poet also mentions birds sacred to the Yakuts – ravens, a crane, an eagle and an eagle owl. The ballad contains interesting ethnographic notes: for example, about the Yakut funeral tradition of hanging coffins on trees or putting them on stumps; about Yakut household items, such as ayah dishes, the chival fireplace, or the magnificent holiday Yhyakh (Bestuzhev-Marlinsky). Such everyday details enrich the fairy tale plot of the ballad. The image of Yakutia in the ballad has a mystical atmosphere, and the description of landscapes, everyday details, specific motives, and images give the national flavor to the continuous plot. The image of Yakutia in the ballad is mythical folklore, that is, original, mysterious, and mystical. The original idea of Yakutia as a snowy, wild country with empty slopes, dark pine forests, "decayed" dwellings, shamanic graves, and terrible autumn nights persists. Nevertheless, the land appears as a place of the people with a distinctive culture and vibrant folklore. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky reveals the mythological, religious side of the Yakut worldview – pagan.

Landscape lyric poetry by P.L. Dravert. In 1905, after a student revolutionary demonstration, Dravert was exiled to the Yakut Vilyuy. During the stay in Yakutia, the scientist participated in expeditions and proved himself as a talented poet-landscape painter and wrote many poems, including *"Forgotten graves"* (Dravert) and *"In the gorge of Chochur-Muran"* (Dravert). During that time, the collection of poems "Rows of Moments" was published, after exile in 1911, the book "Under the Sky of the Yakutsk Territory" was published and was highly appreciated by critics. Dravert became known as a scientist-poet, in whose work scientific and philosophical themes were harmoniously syncretized. As a researcher, Dravert made extensive use of real place names and under each poem, there was the name of the place where this work was written. White nights, meteors, forest fires, sunsets by the Lena River, badarans, precious stones, a moon like a shaman's tambourine, Naman's husky, the path from Kempendyay to Olyokma – all Dravert's impressions are reflected in the poems. For example, while in Yakutsk Dravert wrote the poem "Forgotten graves" (1909), probably referring to the graves of exiles ("exiles of the south"). In the poem, Yakutia is a "remote, gloomy, lost" country with a cold and pale sky, with "yellow pines broken by frost"

and "frozen, then cooled layers of the earth" (Dravert). Dravert wrote poems that painted strikingly accurate peculiar pictures of the nature of Yakutia, as the poems were composed directly on the spot of the image: for example, in the poem "In the gorge of Chochur-Muran": "unmelted ice pierced the ground", "dry grass rustled on the bumps" among "young stalks", "and further and higher flowers huddled along the slopes of the hill", "heated lumps of soil were burdened by their nakedness". The dravertian landscape poetry is an artistic and geographical discovery. Therefore, his poetry is characterized by geographical accuracy, meticulousness in describing the features of the landscape. Together the poetic language it amazes with its metaphorical and elliptical inversion-based structures. A technique typical for landscape descriptions, according to B. Tomashevsky, is objective lyric poetry, which, in contrast to the emotionally expressive development of the theme in a lyric poem, lays out the theme through a distinct highlighting of visual details (TYUPA, 2009). It is objectivity that becomes the main feature of Dravert's poetics. In the poems, the scientist highlights visual details, for example, a detailed description of spring on Chochur-Muran, which boils down to a general lyrical removal of the topic and further "grammatical binding of motives" in one sentence – for example, the motive of the northern nature and the motive of the Yakut exile. Thus, the multifaceted image of the Yakut region in Dravert's poems is shown through objective landscape lyric poetry, vivid visual tropes, and figures of speech.

Yakutia in the post-modern poetry by J.A. Brodsky. The poet first visited Yakutia with a geological expedition in 1959; the second time Brodsky came with an expedition in 1961. During the stay in Yakutia, Brodsky wrote the poems "A Song about Fedya Dobrovolsky" (1959), "Vitezslav Nezval" (1961), "In memory of Baratynsky" (1961), "Leave, leave, leave" (1961), "Chulman, Wooden Chulman" (1961), and "Knock" (1961).

In the poem "Knock" (1961), the image of Yakutia is ambiguous. However, if one ignores the metaphorical component and subtext, they can discover a panoramic living landscape: for example, the reader sees a picture of an autumn forest – dry leaves, "splash of branches", "trunks all around", trees, warm grass, decaying moss, nests. The action takes place in the taiga – "there is one trace in the taiga" (Brodsky). Due to bad weather, the air is cool, cold – the phrase "trembling" is repeated several times, once even "to death." Throughout the action, it is raining, and birds that have fallen from their nests are lying on the ground – the poet is afraid of the black color of their empty nests. At the beginning of the poem, the landscape is shown in the daytime – "trembling through the day", then morning is mentioned – "the dawn does not spoil someone else's death." Then "the night comes". Then the dawn comes again "from unpaved airfields" (Brodsky). Thus, the movement of time back

is probably depicted – the memory of the past, which can be understood from the context of the poem ("past years in Yakutia", "the face of those years is turned"). The motive of death in the poem intensifies only with the arrival of dawn. The image of Yakutia in the poem "Knock" acquires a twofold, even mythological nature. For Brodsky, Yakutia was a place of tragedy, not only a scene of specific events – the region is a repository of memories to which the author returns through the "unpaved airfield" and the "trembling" bridge, like into a forest, into a taiga, and again sees the pictures of years gone by – the already empty "black" nests which probably represent life and the "trail" of birds (people, friends) that fell out several years ago. The plot underlying motive of death is associated with the traditional depiction of autumn; the moral and physical sensation is conveyed by the phrases "trembling" and "rain". In the poem "Knock", Brodsky turns back time, returning to memories – to Yakutia. The movement of the "pendulum" is typical for Brodsky, as for a "high" postmodernist, for whom the attitude towards "content as material" presupposes a non-chaotic "backward movement" (FOKIN, 1998). Thus, the North here is given the status of sacred land in which the sacrament of the spiritual transformation of the world is performed. The dissimulation of the temporal planes of being and the desire to combine them into a single whole of the process intensify the lyrical subject's thirst for spiritual awakening.

The Orthodox principle in Y.A. Yevtushenko's work "Diamonds and tears". A contemporary of Brodsky, Yevtushenko, participated in the expedition along the rivers of Yakutia several times. For the first time, the poet was offered to participate in the 1967 rafting on the Lena River to the Arctic Ocean. For the poet, the travels resulted in about 50 poems of the Yakut cycle and the poem "Northern allowance" (1977). Besides, Yevtushenko wrote several poems about northern nature. One of Yevtushenko's most poignant works is a verse full of civic pathos "Diamonds and tears" (1967) in which the poet showed his vision which ran counter to the propaganda of those years. Thus, the word "alien" is key in the work, as is the legend that diamonds found in Yakutia are tears that turned into precious stones. Throughout the poem, there is the idea of the continuity of the people, the poet stands on the Yakut land as a "grandson of conquerors", bearing a share of responsibility for the events that history tells us about – the conquest of the Sakha lands by the Russian people and the imposition of taxes. The author perceives Yakutia as part of his homeland and confesses the love for its people. The image of Yakutia in Yevtushenko's poem "Diamonds and tears" is presented as a "chilled", "precious and meager" land with "blue fur of mists" over the Olyokma River, with "pink fumes of fireweed", with "honey-intoxicating mows" and old graveyards which are "bitterly swinging crosses" (YEVTUSHENKO, 1967). The author uses

images that are typical for describing Russian realities as a whole. The lyrical subject, walking through the churchyard, sees the graves of "the spiders of these estates" – thieves, merchants, eunuchs, and tax collectors. The poet also addresses the inhabitants of this region, who in ancient times were called alien, and whose life was once "wild", "vodka-less", "without guns and crosses" but "kind" and "quiet" (YEVTUSHENKO, 1967), which, according to Yevtushenko, is what the Orthodox culture is. The quintessence of the poem is the lines: "Let there not even be diamonds here but if only there were no tears" (YEVTUSHENKO, 1967).

Yevtushenko in his poem "Diamonds and tears" presents Yakutia as a land that has gone through a difficult historical and spiritual path, living according to Orthodox moral laws. In Yevtushenko's poetry, the ideologeme of the northern ancestral home of the Russian soul is actualized, the value-based return to which is thought to be the comprehension of the logic of the historical path of Russia.

Conclusion

Considering the transformation of the image of Yakutia in Russian poetry, the image of Yakutia underwent major changes in the context of the general idea of the region, starting with the poem "Voinarovsky" by Ryleyev (1825) to the poem "Diamonds and tears" by Yevtushenko (1967).

If initially, Yakutia became part of the Russian poetry in the early 19th century as a romantic image – due to Ryleyev – although alien and distant, then in the next few years Bestuzhev-Marlinsky brought cultural and folklore interpretation to the original imagery of the provincial region, opened for the Russian audience through the ballad genre, a new semantic content of the image, proceeding from the specifics of the national worldview of the Yakuts. In the early 20th century, along with the movement of history and entry into the era of industry, there was a gradual departure from traditional ideas. Thus, Dravert in 1909, in the objective lyric poetry, shifted the emphasis to a detailed landscape, the specific features of the natural description of the Yakut area, which also contributed to the separation from the image-symbol of a deserted "prison". In the 1960s, Brodsky created a post-philosophical, subjective-psychological image of Yakutia that was in some sense detached from historical motives. At the same time, the figurative representation of Yakutia, due to the poem by Yevtushenko, enters the phase of unification, joins the common space of Orthodox Russia. Russian poets, discovering new facets of the image of Yakutia, thereby not only introduced new motifs plots

into Russian literature but also demonstrated the Yakut stage in their creative evolution. The stability of the "Yakut theme" in the Russian poets' work testifies to the emergence of a typologizing trend in Russian literature, the thematic basis and prerequisite of which is the theme of Yakutia. Thus, the transformation of the image of Yakutia in Russian poetry of the 19th–20th centuries from the poem by Ryleyev to the poem by Yevtushenko shows the process of rethinking the figurative concept of the provincial region and the transition from the isolated position of an unfamiliar space to unification, a single geographic and ideological space of the homeland.

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